

greater were it not for the skill, dedication, compassion and sacrifice of these emergency responders.

I also extend my best wishes to law enforcement authorities as they investigate the causes of this tragedy. Unfortunately, preliminary investigations indicate that some of the fires may have been deliberately lit. I have full confidence that the Australian authorities will bring anyone responsible for this death and destruction to justice, and take such other action as is necessary to minimize the likelihood of future calamities of this nature.

Madam Speaker, the fires that continue to burn in Southeast Australia have caused loss and destruction on a catastrophic scale. The Australian people will truly be in my thoughts and prayers over the coming weeks. I wish the affected communities the very best as they fight to retain and rebuild their lives, and encourage my colleagues to do so as well.

#### CONGRESSIONAL PAY RAISE

### HON. HARRY E. MITCHELL

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, February 11, 2009*

Mr. MITCHELL. Madam Speaker, I rise today to thank Speaker PELOSI for agreeing to block the next scheduled congressional pay raise.

As government acts to cap executive compensation, and as millions of Americans watch their incomes shrink, a pay raise for Members of Congress would have seemed glaringly out of touch.

If we are going to talk the talk of fiscal discipline, we must also walk the walk of self-restraint. The American people are not getting a raise this year. Neither should Congress.

I also wish to thank Dr. RON PAUL and 107 of our colleagues—Republicans and Democrats—who were willing to support H.R. 156, the Stop the Congressional Pay Raise Act. Without the leadership of these Members—so many of them new Members—we may not have taken this important step.

#### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

### HON. TIMOTHY V. JOHNSON

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, February 11, 2009*

Mr. JOHNSON of Illinois. Madam Speaker, unfortunately last night, February 10, 2009, I was unable to cast my votes on the Motion to Instruct Conferees on H.R. 1, H. Res. 114, H. Res. 60, H. Res. 143, H. Res. 128, and H. Res. 134 and wish the record to reflect my intentions had I been able to vote.

Had I been present for rollcall No. 54, on the Motion to Instruct Conferees to H.R. 1, stating that the Economic Stimulus bill must be made available for 48 hours before a final vote, I would have voted "aye." It is unbelievable to me that we are more than likely going to be asked to vote on an \$800 billion piece of legislation, that will be drafted behind closed doors, after having less than 24 hours to review it. We owe it to our constituents to take our time with this bill, study it extensively and ensure that the stimulus will actually create jobs.

Had I been present for rollcall No. 55, on suspending the rules and passing H. Res. 114, Supporting the goals and ideals of "National Girls and Women in Sports Day," I would have voted "aye."

Had I been present for rollcall No. 56, on suspending the rules and passing H. Res. 60, Recognizing and commending University of Oklahoma quarterback Sam Bradford for winning the 2008 Heisman Trophy and for his academic and athletic accomplishments, I would have voted "aye."

Had I been present for rollcall No. 57, on a motion to table H. Res. 143, the personal resolution offered by Rep. JOHN CARTER to ensure that Chairman CHARLIE RANGEL steps aside during his ethics investigation, I would have voted "no." Over the past couple of years we have had an unbelievable number of ethics violations by Members of Congress that have deteriorated the trust that the American people had for its Representatives and it is about time we took a hard line on ethics violations. Rep. RANGEL has admitted that he has made mistakes and the House ethics committee is currently investigating him on numerous separate cases. To make clear to the American people that this is a House of integrity, I must ask Chairman RANGEL to step aside until the ethics committee can complete its work.

Had I been present for rollcall No. 58, on suspending the rules and passing H. Res. 128, Honoring Miami University for its 200 years of commitment to extraordinary higher education, I would have voted "aye."

Had I been present for rollcall No. 59, on suspending the rules and passing H. Res. 134, Recognizing the 50th Anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s visit to India, and the positive influence that the teachings of Mahatma Gandhi had on Dr. King's work during the Civil Rights Movement, I would have voted "aye."

#### TRIBUTE TO JUDITH MONGIN

### HON. TOM LATHAM

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, February 11, 2009*

Mr. LATHAM. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the excellence in education in the 4th Congressional District of Iowa, and to specifically congratulate Judith Mongin of Ames Community School District, who earned the National Board Certification—the highest level of certification in the teaching profession.

National Board Certification is a voluntary assessment program designed to recognize and reward great teachers. National Board Certified Teachers (NBCTs) have successfully demonstrated advanced teaching knowledge, skills and practices. Certification is achieved through a rigorous, performance-based assessment that typically takes one to three years to complete. Certification is offered in 25 different subjects, covering 97 percent of the subjects taught in K–12 schools.

I congratulate Judith Mongin on her well-deserved certification, and I'm certain that she will continue to touch the lives of many youth in her community. It is a great honor to represent Judith in the United States Congress, and I wish her continued success.

#### CONGRATULATING THE "MISS MADISON"

### HON. BARON P. HILL

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, February 11, 2009*

Mr. HILL. Madam Speaker, on Saturday, February 14, 2009, the *Miss Madison* will be crowned the 2008 National Championship Winner by the American Boat Racing Association in Madison, Indiana. I regret that I will not be able to attend the event, but want to reiterate my heartfelt congratulations to those responsible for the win and the entire Madison community.

*Miss Madison* is a real source of pride to Southern Indiana, and rightfully so. As the only city-owned hydroplane race boat, the *Miss Madison* is not only this year's champion, but holds the record for most consecutive seasons run at 47. *Miss Madison* has been racing since 1961 and can boast of a Turbine Engine motor capable of reaching about 19000 rpms.

Congratulations, again, to the *Miss Madison*, its fans and supporters. I look forward to attending award banquets in the future for this powerful boat.

#### INTRODUCTION OF THE FREE FLOW OF INFORMATION ACT OF 2009

### HON. RICK BOUCHER

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, February 11, 2009*

Mr. BOUCHER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to join with Congressman MIKE PENCE in introducing the Free Flow of Information Act of 2009. We are joined by Judiciary Committee Chairman JOHN CONYERS, Judiciary Committee Vice Ranking Member BOB GOODLATTE, and 35 other original cosponsors.

Our bipartisan legislation provides a privilege in federal court proceedings for reporters to refrain from revealing their confidential sources of information.

The privilege is similar in nature to that currently offered by 36 states and the District of Columbia. Such broad-based support for assuring the confidentiality of journalists' sources at the state level lays bare the glaring lack of similar protection at the federal level.

The ability to assure confidentiality to people who provide information is essential to effective news gathering and reporting on highly sensitive and important issues.

Typically, the best information about corruption in government or misdeeds in a private organization will come from someone on the inside who feels a responsibility to bring the information to light.

But that person has a lot to lose if his or her identity becomes known. In many cases, the person responsible for the corruption or the misdeeds can punish the source through dismissal or more subtle forms of punitive action if the source's identity becomes known.

It is only by assuring anonymity to the source that a reporter can gain access to the information in order to bring it to public scrutiny.

I have long thought that the ability to protect the confidentiality of sources is so essential to